

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – HOSPITAL APPOINTMENTS

I write in response to your request for information in relation to hospital appointments in NHS Lothian.

Question:

1. Involving managers - or others - in non intimate out patient appointments. You mentioned there aren't procedures for involving managers in out patient appointments. Does this also apply to involving leads, directors or nurses in any out patient appointments other than intimate examinations or procedures?
2. Are there any situations outside of intimate examinations, when a consultant in Lothian can bring a manager, lead or clinical director into outpatient appointments? If so, on what grounds, and do they need to notify a patient in advance or seek consent?

Answer:

There will be situations that other consultants may be present in at a clinical consultation in order to provide additional expertise or opinion. This could include a clinical lead or director but the reason would be their expertise, based on clinical need. Examples might include medical students, doctors or nurses in training, specialist nurses, other consultants and other members of a multidisciplinary team. There are no specific policies regarding this, it would be a clinical decision based on individual circumstances.

There is no specific policy regarding seeking a patient's consent for a second clinician to be present, but good practice would expect the clinician to introduce by name any other individual present in the clinic room and explain the purpose of their presence. There would be no expectation of prior warning or explicit consent, but a patient could reasonably ask for that individual to step out of the clinic if they were not comfortable with their presence.

Question:

3. Is there a chaperone policy for non intimate examinations or procedures or appointments? e.g. Can a patient bring a chaperone into an endoscopy procedure?

Answer:

Our policy is the Chaperone Policy which has already been provided to you. If you have any further requirements you can discuss this at the department where you have been asked to attend the appointment.

Question:

4. How hospital consultants should handle patient requests for a second opinion. This URL link isn't working and I can't find this on the website... NHS Lothian Safe Haven - Out of Area Referrals for Lothian patients (scot.nhs.uk)

Answer:

I apologise, the link we sent you was to NHS Lothian's internal staff website which you could not access externally. Requests for a second opinion outside of NHS Lothian should be referred through the Safe Haven team. I have included the relevant extract below:

NHS Lothian Safe Haven ensures governance and funding authorisation for out-of-area referrals for highly specialised treatment. The Safe Haven function is based within the Public Health and Health Policy Directorate at Waverley Gate. It deals with the following:

1. Out-of-area referrals including:

- Patient expenses for travel to nationally designated services within NHS Scotland (clinicians can make these referrals without prior authorisation from Safe Haven)
- Referrals to other NHS Boards in Scotland, which may fall outside of service level agreements
- Referrals to nationally commissioned services in NHS England (clinicians should please click on 'forms' tab and complete the NSD funding application form – please return completed form to safehaven@nhs.scot in the first instance)
- Referrals to services in NHS England which are not nationally commissioned (clinicians should please email details to safehaven@nhs.scot for advice about the authorisation process)
- Referrals to nationally commissioned private providers for mesh removal, after initial referral to the NHS GGC National Complex Mesh Surgical Service.
- Applications for S2 funding for treatment in an EU country - see Guidance tab for S2 information leaflet
- **Second opinion referrals within UK**
- Referrals to private sector (referrals for treatment within the private sector are normally not funded - please contact Safe Haven for advice)

Question:

5. National standards. From your reply, it sounds as if the only National Standards that apply are to waiting times only. I had been told Drs need to comply with national standards for outpatient appointment times. e.g. 30 mins for a first outpatient appointment and 10-15 minutes for a follow up, and that these times are generally fixed, irrespective of the complexity, number of organs or systems affected or the rarity of a patients condition. Is this correct?

6. How to apply national standards for patients with a condition affecting multiple organs and systems. Do Drs have discretion on how much time to apply when its not just one body bit they are treating or answering questions on?

Answer:

Time will be allocated for new appointments and review appointments according to the specialty and the patient's condition and patients will be booked in accordingly. Different specialties will allocate times according to typical patient needs in this specialty. This is not subjected to any national standards, but the quoted times are typical of what would be expected. Variation is likely as some appointments take longer for example due to complexity or communication issues, and others may take a shorter time.

I hope the information provided helps with your request.

If you are unhappy with our response to your request, you do have the right to request us to review it. Your request should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this letter, and we will reply within 20 working days of receipt. If our decision is unchanged following a review and you remain dissatisfied with this, you then have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner within 6 months of receipt of our review response. You can do this by using the Scottish Information Commissioner's Office online appeals service at www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal. If you remain dissatisfied with the Commissioner's response you then have the option to appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law.

If you require a review of our decision to be carried out, please write to the FOI Reviewer at the email address at the head of this letter. The review will be undertaken by a Reviewer who was not involved in the original decision-making process.

FOI responses (subject to redaction of personal information) may appear on NHS Lothian's Freedom of Information website at: <https://org.nhslothian.scot/FOI/Pages/default.aspx>

Yours sincerely

ALISON MACDONALD

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Cc: Chief Executive